

# Gay Street Area

## Zoning Study

Department of Planning - November 2005



*Approved*  
The City of Baltimore Planning Commission  
January 19, 2006

# Introduction

The Gay Street corridor between Fallsview and Orleans Street currently has an M-2 zoning category that allows industrial uses in an area that has almost no industrial uses remaining.

The Department of Planning proposes to change the Gay Street area's zoning district from M-2 to B-2-3, to minimize the number of non-conforming uses and provide for future mixed use development appropriate in scale to an adjacent area to the north and to the existing building stock. Moreover, the 2003 Industrial Land Study commissioned by the Baltimore Development Corporation suggests that this corridor is no longer viable for industrial uses.

In essence, the study area would move from an industrial zoning district to a mixed-use zoning district that is conducive to business, retail, and residential uses. We expect that the implementation of this proposal will have the following effects:

- Encourage rehabilitation of industrial buildings for residential and retail use
- Open the opportunity for business clusters.
- Capture housing and commercial interest of consumers.
- Enhance the area and improve the quality-of-life
- Increase overall economic development in not only the Gay Street area, but also downtown and Oldtown.

This zoning study will make note of current development projects taking place in the area as well as provide an overview of the existing conditions there. Next, it will show that this zoning change meets the requirements of the Industrial Land Study, Baltimore City's collective policy to guide planning change-of-use decisions. Then, the report provides the research findings that gave impetus to the proposal. Finally, we propose the rezoning of the Gay Street study area.

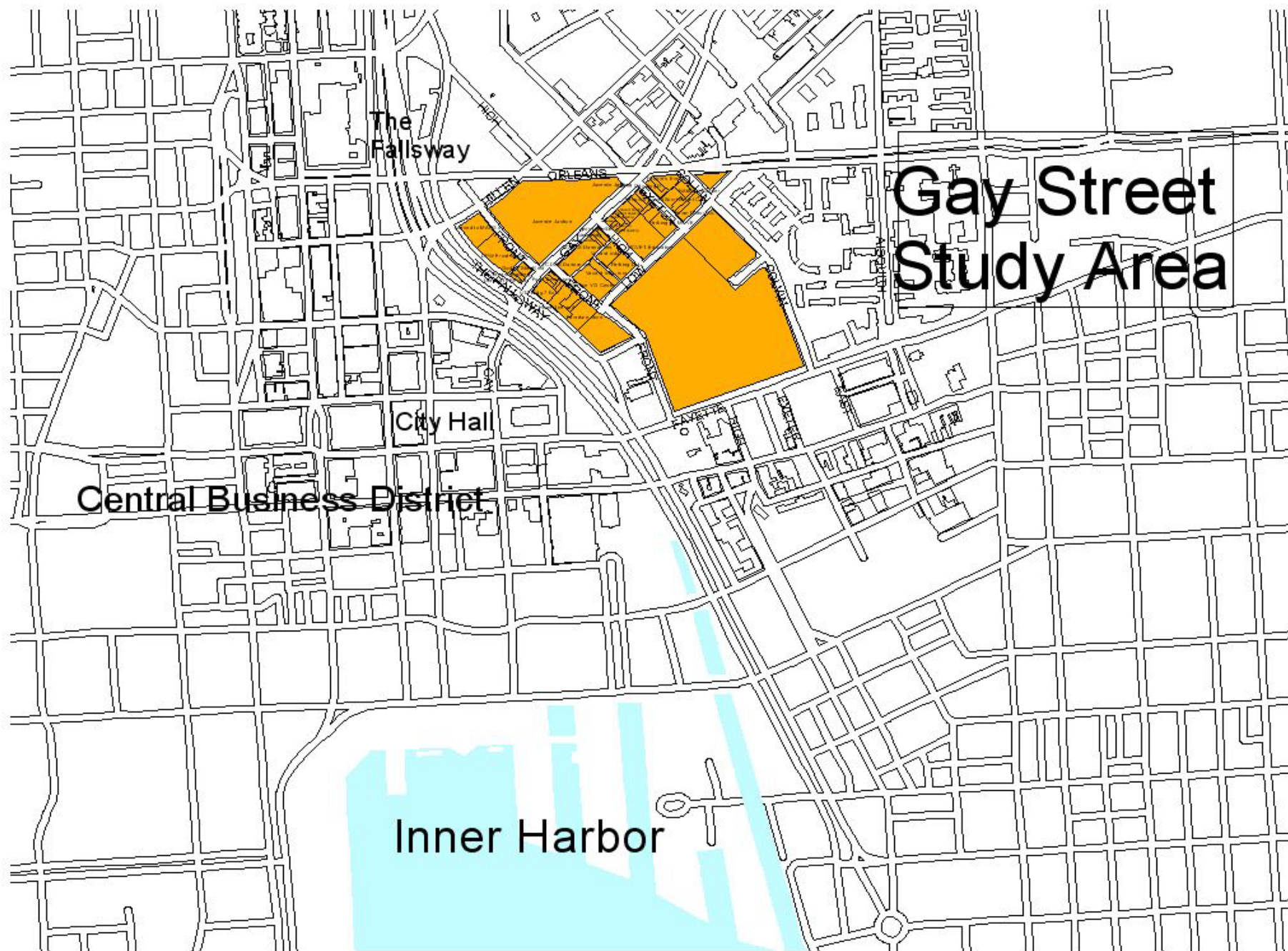




## Gay Street Study Area







The Falls Way

ORLEANS

Gay Street Study Area

City Hall

Central Business District

Inner Harbor

## Existing Conditions

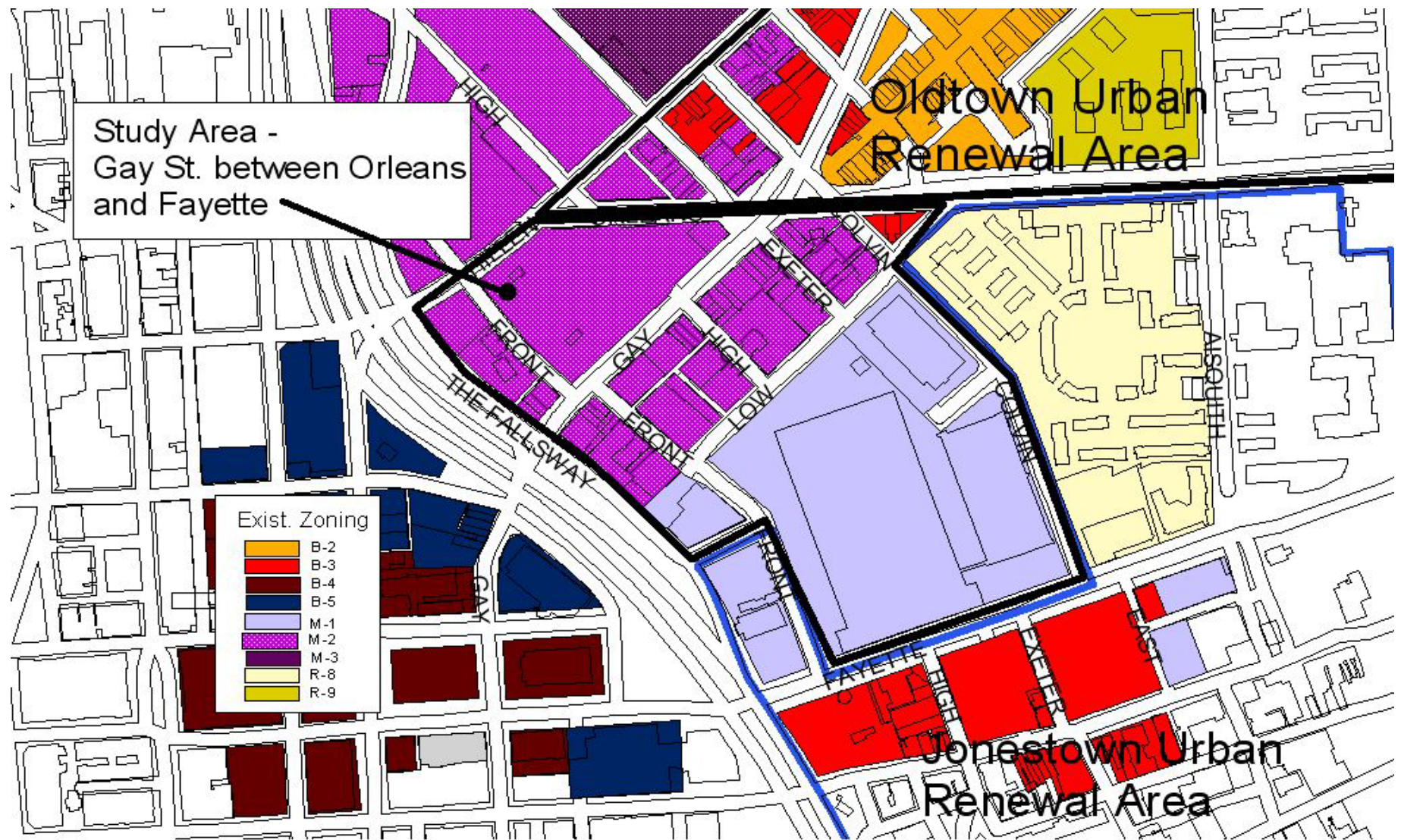
### Gay Street Corridor from the Fallsway to Orleans Street



Currently, the Gay Street Area is classified as an M-2 industrial zone. The area includes forty-eight properties of which six are food related; eleven serve car repair, gas, and parking needs; and three are directed at community outreach. The Juvenile Justice Center, the post office, furniture stores, and pet care businesses are also located in the area. There are only two propoerties that have industrial use, Peoples Electric as a wholesale and retail and a warehouse at 312 Colvin Street. Eight properties are vacant. Details about the individual properties are to follow.







Gay Street Area - Zoning Study  
Existing Zoning

200 0 200 400 Feet

# Study Area Survey

Address	Current Use	Vacancy	Regulation in B-2	Notes
306 COLVIN ST	Belair Motor Co. Auto repair	N	CB	Non-conforming, Warehouse
312 COLVIN ST	National Rubber Footware Inc.	N	NP	
900 E FAYETTE ST	Post Office	N	P	
1000 E LEXINGTON ST	Post Office Parking and Garage	N	P	
201 FALLSWAY	Falls Way Garage	N	P	
808 LOW ST	vacant building	Y	N/A	Permitted as accessory parking
300 N EXETER ST	Parking lot MCVET -accessory	N	P	
307 N EXETER ST	Parking lot for Sport Smart	N	P	
309 N EXETER ST	Sport Smart Clothing	N	P	
311 N EXETER ST	Sport Smart Clothing	N	P	
314 N EXETER ST	Parking lot MCVET	N	P	Permitted as accessory parking
300 N FRONT ST	Furniture Store	N	P	
301 N FRONT ST	Chance YO Center	N	CO	
316 N FRONT ST	Furniture Store	N	P	
318 N FRONT ST	Hillen Tire and Auto Repair	N	CB	
324 N FRONT ST	Hillen Tire and Auto Repair	N	CB	Key: P= Permitted Use CO=Conditional Use by Ordinance CB=Conditional Use by Board Approval
332 N FRONT ST	vacant lot	Y	N/A	
334 N FRONT ST	vacant lot	Y	N/A	
410 N FRONT ST	DPW Front street Garage	N	P	
218 N GAY ST	Leased to Beck & Beck: Substance Abuse Center	N	CO	
220 N GAY ST	vacant building	Y	N/A	
221 N GAY ST	Utz Building -Vacant	N	N/A	
224 N GAY ST	Golden Star Rest and Carry Out	N	P	
235 N GAY ST	Food Emporium	N	P	
237 N GAY ST	Food Emporium	N	P	
239 N GAY ST	Food Emporium	N	P	Auto parts sales permitted in B-2
300 N GAY ST	Juvenile Justice Center (State Property)	N	N/A	
301 N GAY ST	BCDSS Dunbar Center parking and building	N	P	
325 N GAY ST	Custom Tailors	N	P	
327 N GAY ST	vacant building	Y	N/A	
329 N GAY ST	Geo's Liquor/ Deli	N	P	
331 N GAY ST	RJ Locke - Auto Parts	N	P	
335 N GAY ST	RJ Locke - Auto Parts	N	P	
337 N GAY ST	RJ Locke - Auto Parts	N	P	
343 N GAY ST	RJ Locke - Auto Parts	P	P	
347 N GAY ST	People's Electric	N	NP	Non-conforming, Contactor shop
351 N GAY ST	People's Electric	N	NP	
353 N GAY ST	People's Electric	N	NP	
401 N GAY ST	Charm City Dog Day Care	N	CB	Permitted as accessory parking
403 N GAY ST	Charm City Dog Day Care	N	CB	
300 N HIGH ST	Parking lot	N	P	
301 N HIGH ST	MCVET Education and Training Inc (State Property)	N	N/A	
312 N HIGH ST	vacant building	Y	N/A	
323 N HIGH ST	vacant building	Y	N/A	Non-conforming, Contractor shop
325 N HIGH ST	Jake's Deli	N	P	
327 N HIGH ST	vacant building	Y	N/A	
815 ORLEANS ST	Peoples Elec. Store and Parking	N	NP	
901 ORLEANS ST	Citgo Gas Station	N	CB	

## Existing Conditions- Historic District

**Gay Street Area** was designated a National Register Historic district in 2003. This designation makes renovations projects eligible to apply for historic renovation tax credits.

**Description** - The Gay Street Historic District, located to the east of the main downtown business district of Baltimore City, is a notable example of a late 19th and early 20th century commercial corridor in a developing urban area. The historic district is best understood within a variety of contexts including the commercial development of the area, early commercial architecture building types, and the development of cast-iron architecture. With only a single exception, the contributing buildings within the proposed district are either commercial in nature or directly support commercial or light manufacturing enterprises. From its inception, the District was geographically segregated from the main downtown area of Baltimore by the location of the Jones Falls (and later the Jones Falls Expressway) to its west. Originally part of a larger rural and agrarian enclave known as Old Town, the area was annexed into the city boundaries in 1792. However, the District did not take on its present appearance until the mid 19th century, when small commercial enterprises and light manufacturing enterprises were established. The post-Civil War years were ones of particular growth in the area, with banks and insurance companies making their headquarters on Gay Street. The architecture exemplifies this period in American history and contains buildings displaying Victorian Eclectic, beaux-arts, Italianate, and Romanesque elements. Also in the years following the Civil War, two full fronts, cast iron buildings were constructed within blocks of each other on Gay Street. In addition to the cast iron buildings, the collection of commercial buildings in the Gay Street historic District display a broad range of architectural styles and commercial building types. Although the street level facades of most of the buildings have been altered since their construction, they collectively continue to convey the commercial history of the Gay Street area.





## Meeting the Criteria of the Industrial Land Study

In accordance with the change of use criteria of the Industrial Land Study, the Gay Street Area study stresses the following points:

- Due to lack of resources for industry such as parking and easily accessible buildings and garages, the site can no longer meet the needs of industry.
- The site is removed from immediate and efficient deep-water access due to the surrounding concentration of residential and commercial use.
- An industrial infrastructure ceases to exist in the area. This is evident in the current non-industrial use of the study area. Furthermore, the low-intensity use of the area poses no threat to nearby viable industries.



## Research Findings

The Planning Department has reviewed and assessed existing properties in the Gay Street study area. The table on the following page provides exact addresses for each property, current use, vacancy, and its restrictions in a B-2 zoning district.

Only five properties or approximately 10% are non-conforming uses in the proposed zoning category. These properties include four People's Electric contacting shops and a National Rubber Footware Inc. warehouse.

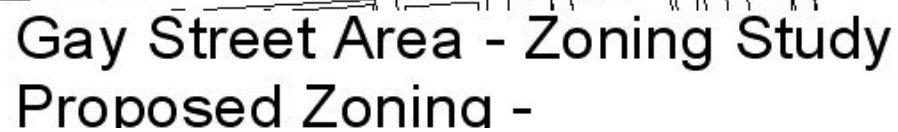
Of the twelve vacant sites, ten are multilevel buildings which are no longer desirable for industry uses. The buildings themselves are better fitted to meet the needs and desires of commercial businesses, offices, and residential developers.

## Proposal

The plan recommends a mixed-use zone that permits both business and residential use. Industrial zoning does not permit any residential use.

The recommendation is B-2-3. This classification would permit a variety of commercial uses such as offices, restaurants, and a range of stores. It also permits residential use. B-2-3 does not permit live entertainment or auto oriented uses. The floor-area-ratio (FAR) is 5.0 which is selected to allow density of new development consistent with the existing buildings. This was selected so that any new buildings would be in scale with the existing urban fabric.








## Current Development Projects

### Our Daily Bread



Catholic Charities is constructing a new three-story, 52,000 sq. feet Our Daily Bread facility at 725 Fallsway. They expect to serve a quarter million meals per year. Located on site will be a soup kitchen, a residential job skill training center, classroom, and dorm facilities for sixty men. A 41-space parking lot will be located on closed Buren Street, between Monument and Madison Streets.

### Healthcare for the Homeless

Health Care for the Homeless will be building a new facility on the 400 block of North Front Street. Health Care for the Homeless provides a comprehensive services to nearly 8,000 Marylanders annually in Baltimore City, Frederick and Montgomery County. Services are designed to meet the full range of needs presented by people experiencing homelessness. Some services include: Primary and Preventive Medical Care, Mental Health Services, Social Work and case management (including referrals for food & shelter), and Addiction treatment through a State-Certified Outpatient Treatment Program.





# Current Development Projects

## Oldtown Mall



In March 2005, the Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) offered several city-owned lots at the south-west corner of Oldtown Mall in a Request-for-Proposals (RFP). The RFP requested that the respondent include a grocery store as the anchor of the site. The RFP also asked that the awarded developer look at revitalization of the larger neighborhood, including historic Oldtown Mall. The total site is approximately 5 acres and is zoned B-2-2

After reviewing the competitive bids, BDC awarded the site to Continental Realty Corporation (CRC). CRC entered into an Exclusive Negotiating Privilege (ENP) for the due diligence part of the process.

The Baltimore City Department of Planning, the Baltimore Development Corporation, and the Department of Housing and Community Development is currently working with the developer on appropriate site layouts.





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